

## CLAIMS

1. A method in a wireless communications device that allocates  
neighbor signals to a candidate set, the method comprising:

determining a number of signals in an active set;

allocating signals to the candidate set more quickly when the  
number of signals in the active set is less than a threshold number than  
when the number of signals in the active set is greater than the threshold  
number.

2. The method of Claim 1,

allocating signals to the candidate set includes delaying the  
allocation of signals to the candidate set for a first delay interval when the  
number of signals in the active set is less than the threshold number, and

delaying the allocation of signals to the candidate set for a  
second delay interval when the number of signals in the active set is greater  
than the threshold number,

wherein the first delay interval is less than the second delay  
interval.

3. The method of Claim 2,

delaying the allocation of signals to the candidate set for the first delay interval includes immediately promoting signals to the candidate set when a strongest of the active signals does not meet a signal quality threshold.

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4. The method of Claim 1,  
when the number of signals in the active set is less than the threshold number,

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allocating signals to the candidate set more quickly only when the number of signals in the active set is less than a threshold number and when a quality of a strongest of the active signals is less than a first signal quality threshold.

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5. The method of Claim 4,  
if the number of signals in the active set is equal to the threshold number,

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allocating neighbor signals to the candidate set more quickly only when the number of signals in the active set is equal to the threshold number and when the strongest of the active signals does not meet a second signal quality threshold,

the second signal quality threshold less than the first signal quality threshold.

6. The method of Claim 1,  
the signals in the active set are assigned to fingers of a rake  
receiver,

5 allocating signals to the candidate set more quickly only when  
the number of signals in the active set is less than the threshold number and  
when a most energetic rake finger has an energy greater than an energy  
threshold.

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7. The method of Claim 1,  
allocating neighboring signals to the candidate set based on  
signal promotion criteria,

15 allocating signals to the candidate set when the number of  
signals in the active set is less than the threshold number based on  
consideration of signal promotion criteria for not more than one scanning  
period.

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8. The method of Claim 1, allocating signals to the candidate  
from a pre-candidate set.

9. A method in a wireless communications device that allocates neighbor signals to a candidate set based on criteria considered over at least one scanning period, the method comprising:

determining a number of signals in an active set;

5           when the number of signals in the active set is greater than a threshold number, allocating neighbor signals to the candidate set using criteria considered over more than one scanning period;

10           when the number of signals in the active set is less than the threshold number, allocating neighbor signals to the candidate set using criteria considered over fewer scanning periods than when the number of signals in the active set is greater than the threshold number.

15           10. The method of Claim 9,  
allocating neighbor signals to the candidate set using criteria obtained over a single scanning period when the number of signals in the active set is less than the threshold number.

20           11. The method of Claim 9,  
when the number of signals in the active set is less than the threshold number,  
allocating neighbor signals to the candidate set using criteria considered over fewer scanning periods only when the number of signals in

the active set is less than the threshold number and when a strongest of the active signals does not meet a first signal quality threshold.

5                   12. The method of Claim 11,  
if the number of signals in the active set is equal to the threshold number,

                  allocating neighbor signals to the candidate set using criteria considered over fewer scanning periods only when the number of signals in the active set is equal to the threshold number and when the strongest of the  
10               active signals does not meet a second signal quality threshold,  
                  the second signal quality threshold less than the first signal quality threshold.

15                   13. The method of Claim 9,  
the signals in the active set are assigned to fingers of a rake receiver,

                  allocating signals to the candidate set using criteria considered  
20               over fewer scanning periods only when the number of signals in the active set is less than the threshold number and when a most energetic rake finger has an energy greater than an energy threshold.

14. A method in a wireless communications device that allocates neighbor signals to a candidate set based on filtered energy samples of the neighbor signals, the method comprising:

determining a number of signals in an active set;

5 filtering the energy samples of the neighbor signals with a filter of length "n" if the number of signals in the active set is above a threshold number;

10 filtering the energy samples of the neighbor signals with a filter of length m, m less than n, if the number of signals in the active set is below the threshold number.

15. The method of Claim 14,

15 promoting signals to the candidate set when the filtered energy samples of the signals of the neighbor signals is greater than a promotion threshold.

20 16. A method in a wireless communications device that allocates signals from a neighbor set to a candidate set, the method comprising:

summing energy from all rake receiver fingers from which information is demodulated;

filtering the energy samples of signals in the neighbor and candidate sets with a filter of length "n" if the summed energy is above an energy threshold;

5 filtering the energy samples of the neighbor and candidate set members with a filter of length m, m less than n, if the summed energy is below the energy threshold.

10 17. A method in a wireless communications device that allocates neighbor signals to a candidate set, the method comprising:

allocating signals to the candidate set based on signal allocation criteria;

15 dynamically changing the signal allocation criteria based on at least one of a number of signals in an active signal set and on a signal quality of a strongest of signal in the active signal set.

20 18. The method of Claim 17, operating the communications device in soft handoff with the signals in the active set,

dynamically changing the signal allocation criteria when the number of signals in the active set changes relative to a threshold number.

19. The method of Claim 17,  
operating the communications device in soft handoff with the  
signals in the active set,

dynamically changing the signal allocation criteria when the  
5 number of signals in the signal strength of the strongest signal in the active  
set changes relative to a signal strength threshold.